



DESE



FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

March 19, 2024

Feeding Missouri's Children Summer 2024



Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

Children need proper nutrition, all year long. Summer meal programs such as the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) make it possible for families to have access to meals after the regular school year ends.

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are eligible to feed children during the traditional summer vacation months, please review the **Summer Meals Letter for LEAs**.

Schools opting to operate SSO will be reimbursed for meals at the free rates for school lunches, school breakfasts, and afterschool snacks, which are slightly lower than the Summer Food Service Program rates.

DESE encourages each LEA to consider the option to operate SSO and provide meals to children in your community. To help you see the comparison between the different meal programs available in the summer months, **use this chart**.

Seamless Summer Option is meant to offer meals to the community and should not be restricted to students enrolled in summer school, as this is not the intention of the program. Students attending summer school may participate in SSO meals served at an open site. To learn more about site types and eligibility please contact our office.

As part of collaborative efforts to **enhance USDA's summer nutrition programs**, approved program operators in low-income, rural areas can now use alternate non-congregate meal service models that are tailored to meet the needs of the children and

communities they serve. To determine if your summer meal program is located in a designated rural option [use this map](#).

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) would like to invite you to participate in an exciting and impactful program that brings nutritious meals to children during the summertime, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)! During the school year, many children receive free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch through the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs. What happens when school lets out? The SFSP was established to fill that nutrition gap and to ensure that children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals that meet Federal nutrition guidelines are provided to children 18 years old and under at approved SFSP sites.

You can find the 2024 [reimbursement rates](#), [SFSP Informational Flyer](#), and additional resources on the DHSS [Summer Food Service Program webpage](#). Please contact sfsp@health.mo.gov if you have any questions.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Mid-Year Election Opportunity

Deadline to Implement Mid-Year is March 31, 2024

This New final rule was effective 10/26/2023 [review powerpoint slides here](#).

The new rule lowers the minimum identified student percentage (ISP) from 40 percent to 25 percent.

This creates a greater flexibility to offer no-cost meals to all enrolled students if financially viable to the school district.

Schools should make these following considerations:

- CEP does remove administrative burdens such as distributing and approving free or reduced-price applications, verifying applications, collecting lunch money from students and counting meals by eligibility
- If the ISP does not yield 100 percent free claiming percentage then it is very essential to ensure financial viability to cover the difference in meals not able to be claimed at the free rate
- FRL percentages used for formula calculation
- LEAs should use the [CEP calculator](#) tool to determine the financial impact

Contact Food and Nutrition Services by phone or email:

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Advocacy News

Ensuring good nutrition for every child is an on-going process that involved Federal Legislation and Regulations. School Nutrition Program Director's are encouraged to educate their local and national representatives about the importance of supporting school

meal programs. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed updates to the school nutrition standards in a few key areas. If passed, **these new rules** could be phased in to effect starting in school year 2024-2025.

Locally, Missouri has a proposed bill SB 1154 (3173.01S), **Missouri School Meals Act**. Contact your local congress representatives and educate them on why this Act matters and how it effects their local school district. **Use this form available** to help communicate and promote your school meals program.

This act establishes the "Missouri School Meals Act". Under the act, schools shall provide a free lunch to students who qualify for reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program. Subject to appropriation, the State Board of Education shall reimburse schools for their share of the cost of providing free lunches to students who qualify for reduced-price lunch.

A school shall determine which students may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program and shall provide information and assistance to parents and guardians for purposes of filling out applications for such Program. Schools shall not publicly identify or stigmatize students who are eligible for such assistance.

This act creates the "School Meals Fund", which shall be used to reimburse schools for the costs of providing free lunches to students who qualify for reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules to implement the program, including the process by which schools may apply for reimbursement.

Reminders and Important Information

Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Final Contract Year Info

For those in the 5th and FINAL year of their contract with their FSMC, new bids must go out very soon so that they can get approved and advertised for the mandatory 45-60 days. The contracts must be approved and signed by DESE before July 1. LEA's must use the Request for Proposal (RFP) that we provide. The RFP and the advertisement must be sent in to DESE and approved to get the process started. Please contact **Kyle Heislen** at (573) 522-9849 to get the RFP or if you have any questions. This must be completed ASAP.

Supply Chain Assistance Payments

Round 4 payments have been processed for LEA's without a Food Service Management Company (FSMC). FSMC schools must complete an attestation which will be **available soon**. You can check for updates and also check the amount of SCA funds for your LEA by using the **Supply Chain Assistance LEA Lookup Tool** under the Supply Chain Assistance section on the **News and Updates page**.

Important School Nutrition Information and Resources

Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI) Resources

5 new RCCI training videos have been added to the RCCI Resources Webpage.

- RCCI Training - **General Program Requirements**
- RCCI Training - **Meal Requirements and Menu Documentation**
- RCCI Training - **Free and Reduced Price Eligibility and Verification**

- RCCI Training - **Claims, Procurement, Resource Management**
- RCCI Training - **Administrative Review**

Let's Talk Recordings

On the **Trainings page** of the DESE, FNS website you can find our past Let's Talk recordings. Below are a few of the most recent recordings. Upcoming webinars will be announced in the Newsletter.

- January 16th - **USDA Foods Packet, Required SNP forms, and Afterschool Snack Program**
- February 13th - **Point of Service / Menu Documentation**
- February 13th - **Commodities 101 Webinar / Commodities 101 Slides**

Wellness Webpage Guidance

New guidance is available on the DESE FNS **Wellness webpage** to assist LEAs with Local Wellness Policy and Triennial Assessment compliance, including **Local Wellness Policy Checklist and Triennial Assessment Guide** - a checklist of LWP minimum requirements and step-by-step guide to completing the triennial assessment and **Local Wellness Policy Triennial Assessment Summary** - a triennial assessment reporting tool for documentation of results, progress, and goals.

Food Buying Guide Updates

Two exciting new features have been added to the **Food Buying Guide** for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG) Interactive Web-based Tool. Both features are available under the Tools menu on the toolbar:

- **Interactive flow chart on using the preparation yield** walks users through when to use the Preparation Yield factor in the Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW).
- **An Ounces to Pounds Calculator** allows users to easily convert ounces to pounds and pounds to ounces to make converting units a breeze!
- **New foods are available in the FBG!** New additions consist of USDA Foods frozen mixed vegetables and a variety of meat items including 11-, 43-, and 48-ounce pouched tuna; boneless, skinless chicken thighs; ground mutton, mutton shoulder chops and stew meat; catfish fillets; and USDA Foods canned pork. Stay tuned for additional yield data releases

This information is also on our DESE, FNS **Meal Pattern Documentation page**.

Training Opportunities for School Nutrition Program Directors

Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership (ISNL) has upcoming in-person and virtual training opportunities available. Lessons provide an overview of school nutrition programs, define the role and responsibilities of a director, and review the relationship between local policies and State/Federal regulations.

For more information and to register:

- **In-Person** - *Both dates are currently full but you can email for possible late add*
- **Virtual** - *There are several virtual sessions and topics available in March*

Professional Standards and Training

The **Guide** to Professional Standards is a great resource that comprehensively outlines the USDA Professional Standards requirements for school nutrition program professionals who

manage and operate the National School Lunch Program. DESE Food and Nutrition has posted a training certificate on the **Trainings** webpage for you to use when completing on-line trainings.

Farm to School

The **Local Food for Schools (LFS) grant** is still open. The application is an easy 3 step process to apply.

1. Watch the **training video**
2. Then complete the **application survey**
3. Finally submit a **written plan** explaining how you plan to use the funds to purchase local foods for school meals



USDA Foods Update

Direct Delivery – Peas, Frozen 110763

A truckload of frozen peas that was scheduled to be received in January was delayed and is now scheduled to be received this month. This product will be placed in LEA's accounts as requested on the 23/24 USDA Foods Packet. Because of the late arrival, if your district is unable to accept some or all of your requested quantity, please reach out to us at donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov and we will remove the product from your account.

Gold Star Live Inventory End of Year Deliveries

As a friendly reminder, all Direct Delivery (Brown Box) and Fee For Service foods that have been processed for the 23/24 school year, must be received during the 23/24 school year.

April is our last scheduled warehouse delivery month, so product remaining in your Gold Star account will automatically be shipped to you in April if you do not place it on your Gold Star order. Please plan your March, and April deliveries to assure you will be able to accept all items you have processed.

Advertising Direct Delivery Foods

School districts that have Direct Delivery (Brown Box) items that they would like to advertise to others as bonus may do so through March 22nd. School districts' will not be allowed to post "bonus advertisements" after this time and throughout April as all districts will be responsible for accepting foods that remain in their accounts at that time.

DESE will continue to offer bonus foods through the month of April for district to select for delivery.

Net Off Invoice Pounds

We are now into March and districts that have processed Net Off Invoice should have utilized more than 75% of pounds processed. Districts that have not reached this level of use will be receiving an inquiry from your processors asking if you have a plan to utilize your remaining pounds before the end of the school year.

Districts with a plan may keep their pounds and continue to draw them down. Districts that do not respond to the processors or that do not have a plan may have their pounds swept into the state account to take them to the 65% usage level.

NOI Bonus – Bonus entitlement is still available. Please reach out to each processor for specific information on pounds available.

DOD Bonus - Bonus entitlement is still available. Please contact us at donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov to request additional dollars.

Direct Delivery (Brown Box) Bonus – A variety of products are currently advertised, and bonus will be available through the month of April. Please check the website often and request only the amount you can immediately receive and store. Bonus items must be added to your next scheduled Gold Star delivery.

Past Newsletters

Missed a past newsletter or need to access them again? You can find them all on our [Food and Nutrition Services Newsletter page!](#)



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